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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART III. EUROPE

Section 12 - Russian Federation

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-02753

III.12 RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. The exact number of those seeking asylum in the Russian Federation is not known. However, approximately 45,000 asylum-seekers and refugees from outside the Newly Independent States (NIS) had sought assistance, information or protection by completing biodata forms at the UNHCR Regional Office in Moscow by the end of 1993. By May 1994, this number had increased to 60,000. Of these, Afghans comprise about 61 per cent, with Somalis and Iraqis representing about 10 per cent each. Smaller groups come from Angola, Zaire, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, the Islamic Republic of Iran and some 25 other countries.

2. By the end of 1993, over 6,300 persons of the 45,000 asylum seekers had been identified as being most vulnerable and benefited from the UNHCR assistance programme. Some 4,100 received a monthly cash-allowance, about 1,200 were housed in temporary accommodation centres outside the city of Moscow, and another 1,000 received meals at soup-kitchens. Of the assisted caseload, 57 per cent are males. Of the male population, 36.7 per cent are under 18 years old. The female population comprises 48.8 per cent under 18 years of age.

3. Figures provided by the Federal Migration Service (FMS) of the Russian Federation show that at 31 December 1993 close to 450,000 persons, representing various categories commonly referred to as NIS "refugees", were registered with the authorities. These include forced migrants (persons from the former Soviet republics who were forced to return to Russia), internally displaced persons and refugees from the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Some 38 per cent are of non-Russian ethnic origin.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

4. Given the scale and complexity of problems related to migration which are affecting the Russian Federation and the region today, the Government gives priority to assistance to returning ethnic Russians, and next to refugees from the NIS ("near abroad") and thereafter to asylum-seekers from non-NIS countries ("far abroad"). These factors coupled with the continuing economic crisis, created major difficulties for the FMS in the registration and status determination of non-NIS asylum seekers. The establishment of a status determination procedure in accordance with internationally accepted standards still remains to be resolved. The number of asylum-seekers and refugees of non-NIS origin known to UNHCR increased from some 17,000 at the beginning of 1993 to 45,000 at the end of the year. In view of the fact that they have no legal status and the constant insecurity to which they are exposed, protection of all groups of refugees and asylum-seekers is a major preoccupation.

Programme objectives and priorities

5. The main priority of the Regional Office is to ensure the protection and basic assistance to non-NIS asylum-seekers and refugees by applying the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. This involves the registration of asylum-seekers, the provision of documents, the establishment of a refugee status determination procedure (RSDP) and the adoption of measures to identify durable solutions for refugees. A further concern, contingent upon the RSDP being in place, involves the identification of durable solutions for those recognized as refugees. This will include the design and implementation of projects, and activities focused on local integration for NIS and non-NIS refugees, notably the development of quick-impact employment projects in order to promote self-sufficiency and facilitate integration into Russian society.

6. Pending the identification of long-term solutions, the provision of life-sustaining support to the most vulnerable among the non-NIS asylum-seekers remains the principal objective of the care and maintenance project.

7. The programme in 1994 also foresees the continuation of modest support towards registering and accommodating some 14,000 refugees and forced migrants of NIS origin in the Krasnodar region who fled from conflict in the Transcaucasian republics. Given the magnitude of the NIS refugee population across the Russian Federation, further efforts will have to be made to integrate assistance projects into UNHCR planning operations aimed at facilitating the self-sufficiency of these persons. Plans will be elaborated jointly with the Russian authorities, and funding will be sought through special appeals.

8. Training in refugee law, status determination procedures and social counselling services, along with institution and capacity building activities for governmental offices and non-governmental agencies in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Sochi, will continue.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

9. The largest part of the care and maintenance project in Russia is implemented by the French non-governmental organization (NGO) Equilibre, which has the responsibility for the provision of cash payments, management of soup-kitchens, direction of the four temporary accommodation centres, social counselling and community services, as well as educational activities for non-NIS asylum-seekers. As of 15 April 1994, EquiLibre has assumed the administrative responsibility for the refugee reception centre in Moscow which had been managed by Caritas until mid-1993 when the UNHCR Regional Office had temporarily to take over responsibility for the centre where refugees receive legal advice. Counselling and supplementary feeding services for pregnant and lactating women were also introduced.

10. A Social Services Coordinator from Radda Barnen is providing technical assistance to EquiLibre and the FMS in social counselling and community based activities, including primary education, language training and social counselling services for non-NIS refugee children and adults.

11. Lorien, a private Russian NGO, manages the medical programme in Moscow. Technical and supervisory assistance is provided to Lorien by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Russian Red Cross Society. The St. Petersburg branch of the Red Cross Society implements a modest assistance project consisting of either food or cash allowances for the most vulnerable NIS and non-NIS asylum-seekers.

12. The FMS manages the housing project in the area around Krasnodar and Sochi, which aims to accommodate victims of conflict from the Transcaucasian republics.

13. The Russia Open University has provided personnel to enter biodata forms into the Central and Eastern European Refugee Invididual Case System (CEERICS) and subsequently carry out data analysis.

14. In an effort to identify new implementing partners for the assistance programme, the Regional Office provides support to the Coordinating Council for Refugees and Forced Migrants, which produces orientation material on integration procedures and legalisation of stay for asylum-seekers in both Russian and English.

15. The FMS in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Sochi provide staff and administrative support structures as well as, to the extent possible, cash assistance and other material support to returning forced migrants. EquiLibre finances some of its operational costs including a portion of salaries of international staff and transport. Radda Barnen covers the salaries and expenses outside the Russian Federation of the Social Services Coordinator and consultants completing specific short-term assignments.

16. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Russian NGO Compatriots provide support to returning ethnic Russians.

17. Substantive support has been received from the Governments of Sweden and Norway who seconded legal officers. In addition, the Swedish Government seconded a camp/site planner, and Denmark provided financial assistance towards status determination. The European Union provides large-scale assistance on a bilateral basis.

18. A Field Research Project has created a computerized data base intended to gather and update country of origin information conducive to emergency preparedness.

General Programmes

Variations in planned activities in 1993

19. During the first quarter of the year, about 1,400 non-NIS asylum-seekers were assisted in the Moscow area, while by the end of the year the number reached almost 6,300. The delay in the start of the asylum-seeker registration and refugee status determination procedure resulted in the prolongation of care and maintenance assistance to the neediest refugees and asylum-seekers, with no prospect of long-term solutions on the immediate horizon. By the end of 1993, a joint UNHCR-FMS project was initiated to assist NIS refugees who became victims of conflict in the Transcaucasian republics. The increase of the care and

maintenance allocation for 1993 was covered through funding from the Programme Reserve.

1994 planned implementation

20. It is projected that a total of 7,400 persons will benefit from care and maintenance assistance to non-NIS asylum-seekers in Moscow by the end of 1994. Some 1,200 are accommodated in centres outside Moscow, 1,000 obtain free meals at soup-kitchens, and 5,200 receive cash allowances. In addition, funds are foreseen to assist the Governments in the Ukraine and Belarus in the registration and status determination of asylum-seekers, and to provide modest assistance to the most destitute 100 asylum-seekers in each of these republics through their respective Red Cross Societies.

21. The rising number of destitute asylum-seekers in need of protection and assistance, whose situation is exacerbated by the absence of opportunities for self-support or any alternative support system, will render the allocation for 1994 insufficient. Additional requirements include initial steps towards the development of income-generating and local settlement activities benefiting two thirds recognized refugees and one third NIS refugees. Local integration projects will be implemented in close cooperation with the FMS, IOM and local NGOs.

22. Voluntary repatriation will be facilitated, whenever feasible and this will be funded under the Overall Allocation of funds.

23. The shortfall will partly be covered through an allocation from the 1994 Programme Reserve. Additional funding, for which an appeal is foreseen, is, however, required to maintain the basic level of care and maintenance of the urban caseload, and to fund activities benefiting destitute NIS refugees. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1994 care and maintenance allocation is as follows:

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Additional needs 1994*	Initial 1995
Food	150,000	108,000	203,200	360,000
Transport	30,000	39,600	0	19,600
Domestic needs	700,000	135,020	2,133,700	4,350,000
Health	100,000	116,000	187,200	350,000
Shelter	1,900,000	1,982,000	218,000	60,000
Community services	50,000	305,200	0	200,000
Education	50,000	69,080	130,900	150,000
Income generation	400,000	450,000	0	200,000
Legal assistance	40,000	60,000	143,600	300,000
Ag. Oper. Support	80,000	235,100	84,500	666,400
Prog. Delivery Costs	761,100	914,200	0	952,800
TOTAL	4,261,100	4,414,200	3,101,100	7,608,800

* to be covered by a special appeal

1995 programme proposals

24. Proposals for 1995 include the same level of care and maintenance assistance and, subject to the establishment of the status determination procedure, an increase in local integration projects. Contingent upon the identification of durable solutions for a rising number of beneficiaries, funding will be sought through special appeals. Whilst assistance to refugees in Belarus is included in the allocation for the Russian Federation, a separate allocation is proposed for the Ukraine.

Special Programmes

Other Trust Funds

25. The new Mass Information project in the Russian Federation aims to transmit refugee and migration issues to the Russian public as well as to convey information and newly acquired data on the situation in the Russian Federation to various countries of origin.

26. Support to the Russian government in managing reception centres for refugees from the Transcaucasian Republics in the Krasnodar area has been included in the UNHCR Special Appeal for Assistance to Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Caucasus and Central Asia of 15 March 1994.

27. A decision has been made to extend protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in St. Petersburg and Minsk through the establishment of a permanent UNHCR presence in these cities. This measure, aimed at facilitating the implementation of legal systems for registration and status determination, will be contingent upon receipt of special contributions.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

Variations in planned activities in 1993

28. Three senior positions were filled during 1993 and early 1994. The Regional Representative arrived in March 1993, the newly created post of Senior Programme Officer was filled in October and the existing post of Senior Protection Officer shortly thereafter in early 1994. UNHCR Moscow incurred higher than foreseen expenditure for official travel as a result of its role as a Regional Office and a six-week mission of a Senior Emergency Administration Officer from Headquarters to assist the office pending the identification of a candidate to the post of Administrative Officer. Three vehicles and office equipment were purchased to assist the incoming staff in their functions.

1994 planned implementation

29. The 1994 revised estimate includes provision for staffing and administrative costs of the Moscow Regional Office and three Liaison Offices in St. Petersburg, Kiev (Ukraine) and Minsk (Belarus). A Senior Protection Officer post and three posts for local staff have been created, effective 1 July 1994, for the Regional Office. An additional vehicle has also been budgeted to facilitate the transport of staff.

30. Subject to funding under a special programme, basic equipment for the three Liaison Offices in St. Petersburg, Kiev (Ukraine) and Minsk (Belarus) has also been included in Regional Office Moscow's budget. Until the establishment of these offices, protection and modest assistance activities will, however, have to be covered by the Regional Office, which is expected to result in significant travel costs. The structure of the Liaison Offices will consist of a Head of Liaison Office and two local staff for each location.

31. The Regional Office, which has also assumed the responsibilities of representing the United Nations in the Russian Federation, moved to larger premises in the same building resulting in expenditure for renovations and associated removal costs.

32. A Public Information Officer was recruited in March 1994.

1995 programme proposals

33. With all existing posts being extended until December 1995, no major changes are at present foreseen in the staffing situation of the Regional Office. The 1995 initial estimate is therefore similar to the revised 1994 budget.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
27.6	–	–	EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE	–
3,920.7 a/	4,261.1	3,500.0	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	6,656.0
95.6 b/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
0.2 b/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
3.9 b/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	914.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes Ia and IIa	952.8
4,048.0	**4,261.1**	**4,414.2**	**SUB–TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**7,608.8**
–	–	328.7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes Ib and IIb	351.8
4,048.0	**4,261.1**	**4,742.9**	**T O T A L (1)**	**7,960.6**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
–	–	291.0	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Mass Information Project	–
–	–	29.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY	–
40.6	19.8	50.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	50.0
40.6	**19.8**	**370.0**	**T O T A L (2)**	**50.0**
4,088.6	**4,280.9**	**5,112.9**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**8,010.6**

a/ of which US$ 601 incurred against Overall Allocation
b/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation